

VZCZCXRO7233
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3652/01 3080301
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 040301Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL IMMEDIATE 0059
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4197
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003652

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

ISTANBUL: PASS TO AMBASSADOR RYAN CROCKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/02/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DECLARATION AND UNSCR RENEWAL

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Patricia A. Butenis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary. In separate November 1 meetings with National Security Advisor Mowaffak al Rubaie and Prime Minister's Political Advisor Sadiq al Rikabi, Political-Military Minister-Counselor Marcie Ries discussed the draft Strategic Partnership Declaration (SPD) and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) renewal. Discussions centered on the short amount of time available to complete the SPD and renew UNSCR. Though confident that the US and Iraq would agree to the substantive content of both the SPD and the UNSCR, the Iraqi advisors raised difficulties in the early completion of these documents. End Summary.

SPD Timing and Process

¶2. (S) POLMILMINCOUNS Ries informed both Rubaie and Rikabi that the US wants to sign the SPD on November 15. She presented the sequence of planned events - Iraqi Leaders' Communique, Strategic Partnership Declaration, UNSCR renewal, and security agreement negotiations - as a continuum beginning with the Iraqi leaders' August 26 request for a long-term security relationship with the US.

¶3. (C) Rubaie and Rikabi both stated that they anticipate difficulty with a November 15 SPD signing date. Rubaie argued that the Iraqi leadership needs time to introduce the partnership concepts to the Iraqi body politic. He stated the intent to circulate the text to Council of Representatives (COR) bloc leaders. This consultation will demonstrate that the entire political elite is adopting the SPD, not just PM Maliki. Rubaie opined that it would not be difficult but not impossible to get a sufficient level of domestic political support within two weeks.

¶4. (C) Rikabi expressed reluctance to advance the SPD in the current political environment. He stated that PM Maliki told President Bush in a teleconference that the situation needs time to settle down after the October 21 Sadr City raid. (Note: The raid resulted in significant Iraqi casualties. A widely-held Iraqi opinion, fanned by sensational press coverage and posturing by politicians, is that the raid represented an excessive use of force. End Note.) Rikabi argued that some in the COR, if the issue was raised now, would juxtapose the strategic partnership against the raid and bloodshed. He also noted the slowness of approval processes within an "immature democratic system" as well as the difficulty of countering misinformed public opinion. Ries pointed to the importance of completing the declaration before debate on the UNSCR begins and to general improvements in the security situation which strengthen the government's hand.

¶15. (S) Both Rubaie and Rikabi commented that progress on the draft SPD text has slowed as Iraqi senior leaders have turned their attention to Turkey, the PKK, and the Istanbul conference. Nonetheless, Rubaie stated that PM Maliki has personally reviewed and commented on the draft twice. Rubaie expects to return an official Iraqi draft of the SPD text to Embassy officers soon after the Istanbul conference ends.

SPD Content

¶16. (S) During her meeting with Rubaie, POLMIL MC Ries positively emphasized the importance of key elements in the SPD text:
-- the long-term nature of the partnership; that it contained in addition to security cooperation, political and economic elements;
-- the importance of privileges and immunities for diplomatic and military personnel;
-- and the perspective of moving forward together in a partnership between two sovereign states.
Rubaie said that he would convey these key elements to PM Maliki.

UNSCR Timing and Process

¶17. (S) Similar to Rubaie's comment on the process of gaining consensus on the SPD, Rikabi mentioned the government's intention to circulate the Iraqi letter and the UNSCR draft to the COR bloc leaders. He explained that the purpose of such consultation would be to show that renewal is a national

BAGHDAD 00003652 002 OF 002

decision - not a personal decision of the Prime Minister.

¶18. (S) Rikabi explained that building consensus will require time. He noted the necessity of having public support for the decisions of the government. Rikabi worried about Arab media reaction to the renewal process. He stated that the Prime Minister needs to be strong at the beginning of negotiations, arguing that negotiations should begin later when PM Maliki is in a stronger public position. Finally, Rikabi recalled the GOI tendency to acquiesce to Council resolutions "at the last minute."

UNSCR Content

¶19. (S) Rikabi explained that it is very important to show the Iraqi people that this is the last UNSCR renewal. He claimed that last year, there was a similar expectation that UNSCR 1723 (2006) would be the last renewal, but neither side took sufficient steps to replace UNSCR authorities with other agreements.

¶10. (S) Rikabi also argued that to build popular support for the government and its renewal decision, the UNSCR text must establish a proper relationship between the GOI and the Multinational Force. The resolution must show that the GOI is strong. He noted that there have been many positive changes in the situation since UNSCR 1546 (2004), and an updated UNSCR should reflect the increased capabilities of the Iraqi government and security forces.

BUTENIS